



# SMOG CHECK ADVISORY

Official Publication of the California Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair

April 1998

## BAR-97 Program Rolling Toward May 1st Implementation Deadline

**T**he installation of BAR-97 Emission Inspection Systems (EISs) are continuing according to the timetable previously outlined in the March *Smog Check Advisory*, on BAR's Web Page, and in the media, with a slight revision.

Originally, on April 1, 1998, fully-certified BAR-97 units, including dynamometers and final software, had to be completely installed and operating in Enhanced Areas. At least one Acceleration Simulation Mode (ASM) test must have been sent to the Vehicle Identification Database (VID) by April 1 to verify installation. Due to continued installation delays and glitches, this deadline has been extended to May 1.

Two-speed idle tests (or passing results from ASM tests) will still be accepted through April 30, 1998.

On May 1, 1998, full implementation will begin, and only ASM tests on dynamometers will be accepted for vehicles registered in the Enhanced Areas. No two-speed idle tests will be accepted, except for designated vehicle groups, such as all heavy-duty vehicles, full-time four-wheel drive, all-wheel drive, and traction control vehicles. Moreover, in Enhanced Areas, trucks over 8500 Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) will continue to receive two-speed idle tests.

As of March 1, only test results from a BAR-97 test analyzer system (TAS) were being accepted from stations in the Enhanced Areas of the state, and BAR-90 TAS units could no longer perform Smog Checks in these areas. •••

## FULLY CERTIFIED BAR-97 EIS EQUIPMENT NOW AVAILABLE

**B**AR-97 Emission Inspection Systems (EISs) manufactured by three separate firms have been fully-certified by BAR's Engineering Unit.

After successful completion of beta testing, equipment manufactured by SPX was fully certified on February 20, and Snap-On/Sun and ESP received full certification on February 27. These three firms represent more than 90

percent of the current Smog Check equipment market in California.

"More than 3,000 fully certified BAR-97 units have been sold and are now being installed in the Enhanced Areas," said David Amlin, Chief of BAR's Engineering Unit.

Units manufactured by Unidyne and Worldwide are currently in the certification process, Amlin said.

*Representatives for these five firms may be contacted as follows:*

COMPANY	CONTACT	PHONE NO.
SPX	Jeff Nixon	(916) 635-0904
Snap-On/Sun	Bill McCallister	(800) 865-1199 ext. 7596
ESP	Mike Golway	(800) 888-3004 ext. 13
Worldwide	Art Vasquez	(909) 599-6431 ext. 21
Unidyne	Jimmie Liou	(415) 292-8088

## GPCs Review Gross Polluter Repairs

*Offer Advice to Repair Shops*

**A**bout 20 percent of the vehicles arriving at Gross Polluter Certification (GPC) pilot stations are incorrectly or incompletely repaired, according to a survey of some GPC station owners.

"We're seeing some unbelievable repairs," said Linda Fox, co-owner of Cary Fox's Tire & Auto Center in Northridge.

Fox said that the majority of the repair shops are selling their customers catalytic converters as a repair rather than fixing the actual problem. She said 48 of 50 Gross Polluters arriving for certification at her shop have new catalytic converters.

"Those motorists will be very unhappy in a few months when their vehicles begin to run poorly again, because the underlying problem has not been fixed," she said.

Fox added that she believes it would be helpful if shops offered their customers a pre-inspection, even if they charge for it, because it would be cheaper than having to go to a GPC station if they fail as a Gross Polluter. She also advised managers and technicians to explain the program to their customers, and let them know that the GPC visit will be an additional charge.

"That way the people can be informed a little more about their options," she said. "Most don't know there is a repair cost limit."

In Los Angeles County, Hal Butler at Butler Automotive in Beverly Hills, said he is finding more incorrect repairs, and that some dealers have sold customers

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### KEY ACTION DATE

**May 1, 1998**

Full program implementation begins. Only ASM tests on the dynamometer for vehicles registered in the Enhanced Areas will be accepted.

## Data Refresh To Show ASM Endorsement

If technicians want to verify whether they have received their Acceleration Simulation Mode (ASM) endorsement after passing their 8-hour Transition Training Course examination, all they have to do is run a data refresh on their BAR-97 Emission Inspection System (EIS).

After the test, passing scores are sent to BAR where they are entered into the state's Teale Data System, which updates the Vehicle Information Database (VID). The process takes about 10 days AFTER the answer sheet is received from the training institution.

At about 4 a.m. each day, the endorsement information is electronically sent to the smog shop's EIS and a data refresh after that will verify the endorsement. ...



## THE BOTTOM LINE

- 108 cut score on the current smog exam
- 68.8 percent of technicians who passed EA Smog Check exam in February 1998
- 6,081 technicians have completed their BAR-97 8-hour Transition Training
- 250 technicians completed the 20-hour training course as of February 6
- 1,840 Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair stations as of March 13
- 114 Gross Polluter Certification (GPC) Pilot Stations
- 58 Test-Only Stations as of March 5 (107 lanes total)
- 3,466 Enhanced Area stations with BAR-97 Emission Inspection Systems installed with interim or final EIS software as of March 24

## GROSS POLLUTERS

*Continued from page 1*

repairs that have not helped them.

"We explain it to them thoroughly, and try to help them," he said, referring to the Gross Polluters his shop sees. "I usually make them happy when they leave here."

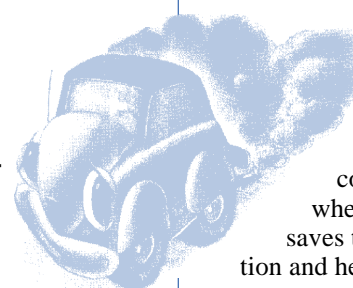
Butler's approach to customer service appears to be paying off. Only about 25 percent of the Gross Polluters needing further repairs have gone back to their first repair shop, but most of those still come back to him for their retest.

Most often technicians are failing to make a thorough diagnosis, or simple adjustments or checks of timing, air/fuel ratio, and oxygen sensors, Butler said. He advises his fellow station owners and technicians to sell the diagnosis and to include minor adjustments such as timing and air/fuel ratios, which gives consumers value with their diagnosis. "It works if you really explain it," he said.

At Dave Sahagun's Chevron station in San Francisco's Pacific Heights neighborhood, about 20 percent of the Gross Polluters that visit his shop after being repaired initially at other shops are failing. Technician Ron Camba attributes the failures to incomplete repairs.

"There are a lot of EGR failures, and the timing is not adjusted properly," he said. His experience with failing Gross Polluters differs from Butler's in one respect, however. Even though the vehicles receive incomplete or ineffective repairs from their original shop, most are going back to the same shop to get more repairs done. Only about 5 percent have their additional repairs done at his shop. However, like Butler's customers, most do return for the retest. Like his colleagues in Northridge and Beverly Hills, Camba has some simple and helpful advice to owners and technicians.

"Make sure the EGR is functional and timing is set to the manufacturer's specifications before you allow your customer to come here," Camba said. "It's not costly and it's pretty basic when you do a smog test. It saves the customer the frustration and headache." ...



## NEW INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION FORMED

The Cal Emission Testing Industries Association, an organization dedicated to representing the interests of Test-Only facilities in the Smog Check program, has recently been formed, according to its Executive Director, Randall Ward.

"Our mission is to assist the Bureau of Automotive Repair in educating vehicle owners on the Test-Only program, and to provide the best trained and most conscientious technicians in the industry," said Ward.

"Moreover, the Association is dedicated to recognizing the economic investment made by owners of Test-Only facilities and, to that end, represent their interests before agencies of state government and the California Legislature," added Ward.

The organization plans to sponsor technician training programs throughout the state in conjunction with BAR's efforts, and to develop programs that better educate vehicle owners on the Test-Only program.

Membership in the new organization is open to groups and individuals who support the Association's mission and goals, Ward added. For more information call (916) 443-6714 or write to:

**Randall Ward**  
**Cal Emission Testing**  
**Industries Association**  
**(CETIA)**  
**1014 - 10th Street**  
**Suite 300**  
**Sacramento, CA 95814**

## Answering Your Questions

### TECHNICIAN TRAINING & LICENSING

*Technicians are sometimes confused about various training and licensing issues. As a result, BAR's Manuals and Publications Branch compiled a list of questions it has received from technicians in recent months and developed the following Question and Answer column. Additional questions can be asked through the Smog Check website or by writing to our office in Sacramento.*

**Q.** If a technician in a Basic Area currently holds an Unlimited Emissions (EU) or Advanced Emissions Technician (EA) smog license, and the license expires after July 1, what must he/she do to obtain or maintain an EA license, since the 20-hour training is not currently being offered in most Basic Areas of the state?

**A.** All technicians who have EA Licenses that expire *after June 30, 1998* (regardless of where they work or live) must pass the *Advanced Emissions Diagnostic Training Course* (also known as the "minimum 20-Hour Update Course") prior to submitting their application for license renewal. In addition, all technicians applying for a new EA license must have passed the 20-hour update course (and submit proof on the application form), if their application is postmarked *after June 30, 1998*.

If a technician does not want to attend the update class, however, he/she may opt for a Basic Area (EB) smog technician license in lieu of the EA smog technician license. Currently, EB smog technician licensees are not required to attend the update training as a condition of licensing.

**Q.** Which course do I need to attend to obtain an EA license—the 20-hour or 8-hour training? We are hearing conflicting stories.

**A.** As noted above, the 20-hour update course is required to obtain or renew an EA license after June 30, 1998. The 8-hour BAR-97 Transition Class is not a requirement for obtaining or renewing an EA or EB license. The 8-hour course is an endorsement to an *existing* EA or EU smog technician license, and allows techs to access the certification mode of the BAR-97 Emission Inspection System so they can perform Acceleration Simulation Mode (ASM) emis-

sions tests. However, submitting proof of passing the 8-hour course when applying for initial or renewal of licenses will ensure the information is added to the technician's record promptly.

**Q.** Why am I continually being tested on the same materials when I renew my smog technician license? Since I already have A6, A8, and L1 certification, isn't this rather redundant?

**A.** The smog technician examination is a comprehensive test of all the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to be a competent smog check technician. However, BAR has found that many technicians who have failed the exam did not have a good grasp of basic automotive theory and operation. As a result, regulations were adopted to require prerequisite training (i.e., ASE certificates or ASE alternative courses) before technicians take the smog technician examination.

The smog technician test differs from the ASE certification examinations. Each smog tech test question is geared specifically to California's emission inspection program. In that respect, technicians are not being tested on the same material.

**Q.** When will the Basic Clean Air Car Course (CACC) student workbook be updated to reflect Smog Check Manual Revision 3, and any other program changes?

**A.** We will update the reading assignments in the CACC workbook soon. Updates to the current Smog Check Inspection Manual dealing with the new smog program were recently completed and will be distributed in mid-April.



## Use Manufacturers' Checklists To Prepare For BAR Inspections

**O**fficial BAR-97 station inspections by BAR field representatives will begin shortly, and stations can begin preparing for these visits by reviewing the manufacturers' BAR-97 Emission Inspection System (EIS) equipment checklists provided when the equipment was delivered.

"Smog Check stations are required to maintain equipment as outlined in the California Code of Regulations," said BAR's Chief of Smog Check Field Operations, Mike Vanderlaan. "If stations use the checklists provided by the manufacturers of their equipment, they'll be in good shape when our field staff arrives."

Additional copies of the checklists or the equipment regulations can be obtained by calling local BAR field offices. The phone numbers of those offices can be found on the last page of the *Smog Check Advisory*. •••

## Change of Name & Address Notification Required

Licensees who change their name and/or address are required to notify DCA's Licensing Division within 14 days. Here's how to do it.

1. Contact DCA's Licensing Division at (916) 322-4000 to request a change of name/address form.
2. Complete the form and mail it, along with your original Auto Repair Dealer business license and all associated station licenses (a photocopy of the business license may be posted at the place of business until the new license arrives) to:

**Department of Consumer Affairs  
Licensing Division  
400 R Street, Suite 3080  
Sacramento, CA 95814**

Or, if you're a Smog Check technician at a testing site, ask the test proctor for a Change of Candidate Information form, fill it out and return it to the proctor.



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## **BAR FIELD OFFICE PHONE NUMBERS**

Bakersfield ..... (805) 833-6304  
Riverside ..... (909) 782-4250  
Canoga Park ..... (818) 596-4400  
Sacramento ..... (916) 255-4200  
Culver City ..... (310) 410-0024  
San Jose ..... (408) 277-1860  
Fresno ..... (209) 445-5015  
South El Monte .. (818) 575-6934  
Fullerton ..... (714) 680-7851  
Hayward ..... (510) 785-1961  
Oceanside ..... (760) 439-0942

DCA Cashiering (916) 322-7002  
DCA Licensing... (916) 322-4000  
ET Help Desk .... (916) 255-4476  
MCI ..... (800) 731-SMOG  
(Then press 5 for technical support)

**Consumer Assistance and  
Referee Center: (800) 622-7733**

**DCA HOTLINE: (800) 952-5210**

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### **Little Scoops**

- ▲ A reminder—smog technicians must have passed the test administered after the 8-hour BAR-97 Transition Course and have received their Acceleration Simulation Mode (ASM) endorsement or they will be unable to perform ASM loaded-mode tests (see related story on page 2).
- ▲ Also in Enhanced Areas...for shops that inspect ONLY trucks over 8500 GVWR, the BAR-97 Emission Inspection System (EIS) may not have to have a dynamometer, but the technician must have an ASM endorsement.
- ▲ When vehicles registered in Basic Areas need biennial inspections and are tested at an Enhanced Area station, they will get a two-speed idle inspection, unless the consumer opts for the ASM test after full disclosure by the shop of test or price differences.
- ▲ Likewise, when vehicles registered in Enhanced Areas need biennial inspections, they must get an ASM inspection at a station in an Enhanced Area, or may get an ASM inspection at a station in a Basic Area, as long as that station has a BAR-97 EIS with a dynamometer and a technician with an ASM endorsement.
- ▲ A special note to stations inspecting a government fleet vehicle... although issuing a certificate to a government vehicle is not mandatory, be sure to get the fleet operator's BAR file number *before* your shop conducts the inspection. If the operator doesn't know it, get the Agency's name and call BAR's Fleet operations unit at (916) 255-1336 for assistance.

Visit DCA/BAR's Web site: [www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov) or [www.smogcheck.org](http://www.smogcheck.org)